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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 007398

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: GOF CONDEMNS IRANIAN PRESIDENT'S ANTI-ISRAEL  
RHETORIC, CONVOKES IRANIAN AMBASSADOR

REF: STATE 199225

Classified By: POLITICAL MINISTER COUNSELOR JOSIAH ROSENBLATT, FOR REAS  
ONS 1.4 B/D

1. (C) Poloff met October 28 with Benoit Knopper, the MFA's desk officer for Iran, to deliver reftel talking points on the Iranian President's increasing extremism. Knopper noted the GOF's statements condemning the Iranian President's rhetoric. Furthermore, Knopper said, the MFA had convoked in the morning of October 27 Sadegh Kharazzi, the Iranian Ambassador to France, for "clarifications" regarding President Ahmadi-Nejad's October 25 call for Israel to be "wiped off the map." Informal translations of FM Douste-Blazy's statement, an MFA statement, and President Chirac's statement are at paras 3, 4, 5, respectively.

2. (C) Poloff also raised Ahmadi-Nejad's statement and the GOF reaction during a discussion on other issues with Herve Besancenot, the MFA's DAS-equivalent for Egypt and the Levant. Besancenot said the MFA had been "very tough" during its demarche to the Iranian Ambassador. Still, Besancenot said he could not imagine France joining Israel's reported call for Iran's exclusion from the UN. According to Besancenot, Israeli FM Shalom never called for Iran's exclusion during a private meeting and subsequent press conference with FM Douste-Blazy on October 27 (septel). When asked about President Chirac's statement (see para 5) in which he said Iran was at risk of being banished from the international community due to Ahmadi-Nejad's comments, Besancenot said Chirac was referring to Iran isolating itself; this did not mean that France would push to isolate Iran.

3. (U) Informal translation of FM Douste-Blazy's October 26 statement:

"If these statements (of President Ahmadi-Nejad) are in fact reported correctly, they are unacceptable. I condemn them with the greatest firmness. I have demanded that the Iranian Ambassador in Paris be convoked to the Quai d'Orsay in order to obtain explanations. For France, Israel's right to exist can never be contested."

4. (U) Informal translation of the MFA's October 27 press statement:

"As the Minister (Doust-Blazy) demanded, the Iranian Ambassador in Paris, Mr. Sadegh Kharrazi, was convoked this morning to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was asked for clarifications regarding the speech given the day before by his president on the occasion of a conference in Teheran on the theme "The world without Zionism" in which the president called for "wiping Israel off the map."

The Ambassador was reminded that Israel's right to exist cannot be contested. The Israeli-Palestinian question cannot serve as a pretext for questioning this fundamental right. We repeated our condemnation to him of President Ahmadinejad's remarks. The Ambassador took note of our demarche and indicated that he would relay it to his authorities."

5. (U) Informal translation of President Chirac's October 27 statement at the informal European Summit at Hampton Roads:

"...I was profoundly shocked by the declarations of the Iranian president. I find them, frankly, insane and irresponsible. The Iranian president is running the risk of his country being banished from the international community; which is, for a great country like Iran, an unacceptable situation. This being said, there has also been an EU declaration led by the British presidency, which has been approved and should be being distributed right now." Please visit Paris' Classified Website at:  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/paris/index.c> fm  
Hofmann